

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend paragraph [0005] to read as follows:

[0005] The piezoelectric actuator can be preloaded with force when installed in the support element. For example, the piezoelectric actuator can be clamped within the support structure with an adjustable screw supporting one end allowing optimal force preloading. An adjustable screw configuration is easy to use and allows a large degree of adjustability. Preloading the piezoelectric actuator in any suitable fashion contributes to maximum efficiency of force transfer during actuation, and allows fine tuning of the initial position ~~of the~~ of the apparatus prior to actuation of the piezoelectric element. Preloading can also ensure that the piezoelectric actuator maintains contact with the apparatus at opposite ends throughout the range of expansion and contraction. The use of a threaded adjustment screw for preloading enables assembly without requiring adhesives or other means of securely connecting the piezoelectric actuator at opposite ends to the apparatus, and avoids the possibility of damaging tension or torsional moments on the piezoelectric actuator. The threaded adjustment screw allows simple compensation for dimensional variations in the piezoelectric actuator during assembly to the support.